

Nature's Call

An Activity Newsletter for Kids by Utah's Project WILD -- Winter 1992

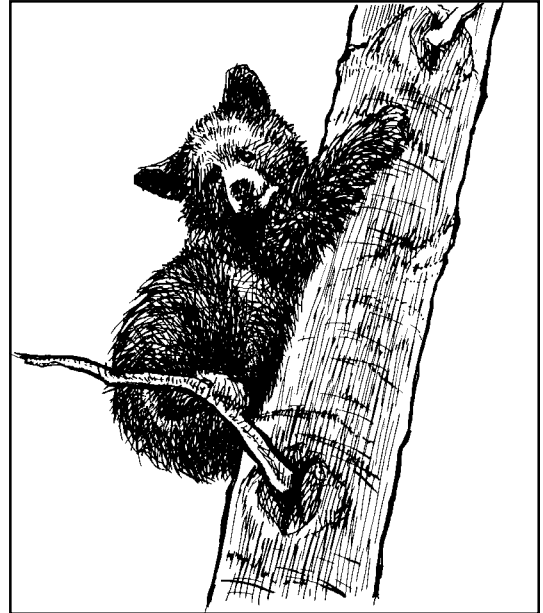
Utah's Black Bears!

Over 800 black bears live in the forests of Utah.

Black bears spend their winters in dens because the food that bears like to eat is hard to find in the winter. In Utah, these dens are often in caves, under roots of large trees or under large rocks on rocky mountain slopes. The bears usually enter their dens in November and stay there until April or May.

From early records, we know that black bears have roamed the wild areas of Utah for many years. To be sure that black bears will always live in Utah, the biologists at the Division of Wildlife Resources continue to study the bears and their habitat.

You can learn more about these bears by completing the activities in this booklet.



You Are What You Eat!

Black bears are called **omnivores** because they eat both plants and animals. Humans are also omnivores! How does your diet compare to that of Utah's black bears? List below some of your favorite foods for each season. Have you included plants and animals on your list? How is your diet similar to a black bear's diet? How is it different?

What does a black bear eat?

Winter

(Black bears are in their dens during the winter. During this time, they do not eat or drink. In order to survive through the winter, bears need to eat a lot during the late summer and fall.)

Spring

*grasses, flowering plants and winter-killed animals (called **carrion**)*

Summer

ants, insects, elk calves, deer fawns and some plants

Fall

berries (such as chokecherry, snowberry, mountain ash and elderberry) and acorns

What do you eat?

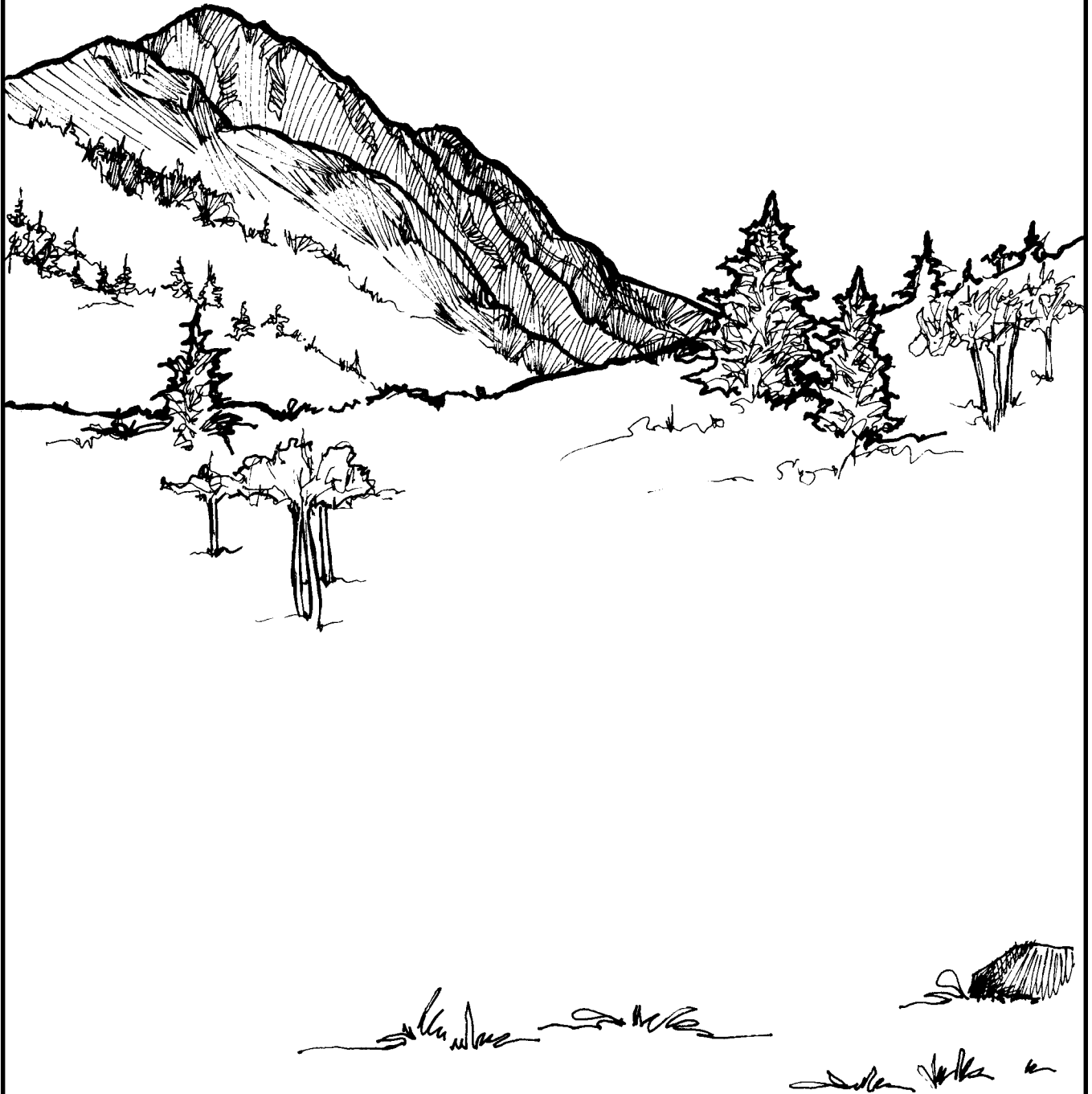
Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

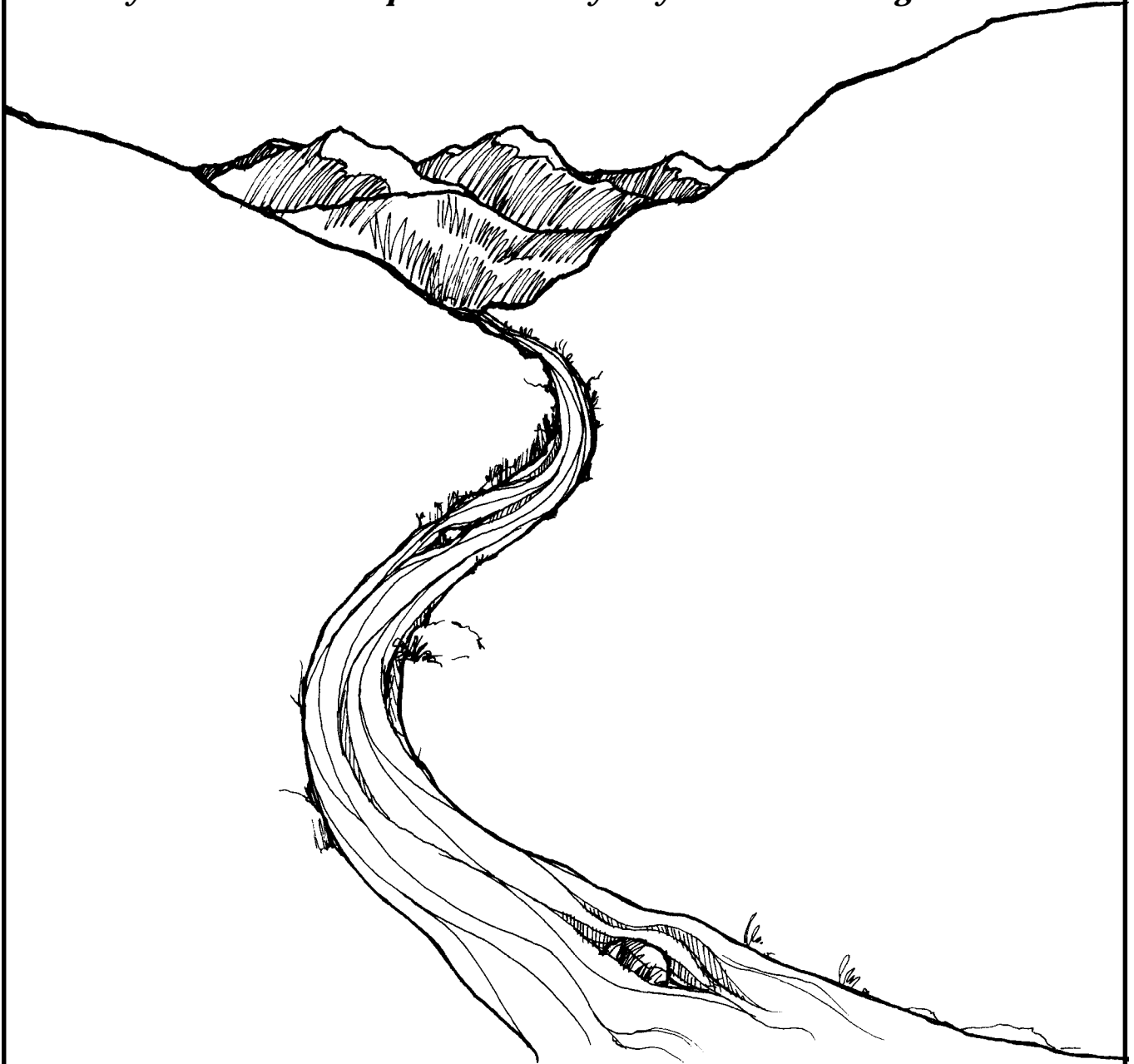
Color-Coated Bears!



American black bears are not always black! In Utah, black bears are sometimes different shades of black, brown, cinnamon or blond. One color characteristic that all black bears share is their brownish muzzle. In the scene above, draw three bears that you might see in Utah. Make each one a different color.

BEAR Habitat is Anything But BARE!

Forests are very important to black bears. In Utah, forests that are heavily wooded and brushy provide the habitat which black bears need to live. Black bears like areas where the trees and bushes are over six feet tall, and they don't like wide-open areas. Why do you think this might be true?



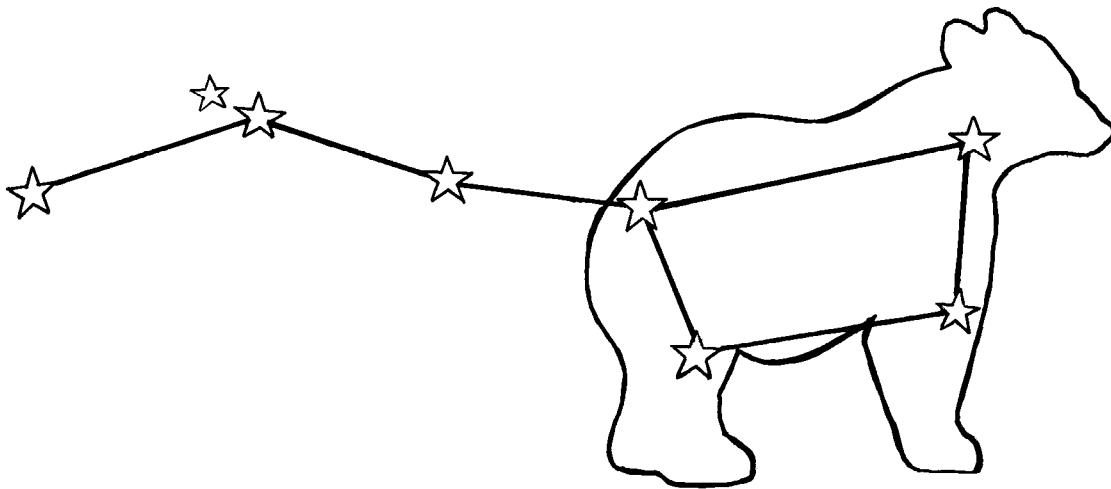
On the hillside above, draw a bear that is coming down to the creek. Then draw in the bear's habitat -- heavily wooded and brushy. You might include oak trees, pine trees, maple trees or aspen trees. There also might be berry bushes, willows and tall grasses. Remember, when you're finished, the bear should be well hidden in its habitat.

Where is the Bear in the Night Sky?

There are many stories about bears. The Native American people often told stories about the strength and power of the bears with which they lived. They were also fascinated with the stars, and they told stories about how the stars happened to be in the night sky. Some of these stories about the stars included tales of great bears.

One Native American legend tells about how the stars in the Big Dipper came to be. In this story, there were three hunters searching for food. They tracked a great bear across the skies until they caught up with it in the fall of the year and killed it. The hunters took the meat and bear skin and left the skeleton. The blood of the bear turned the autumn leaves red. Each year, the hunters track the bear again, and the stars move across the sky. The small star seen next to the middle hunter in the constellation is the hunters' dog, named "Hold Tight."

The Big Dipper is part of a larger constellation called Ursa Major or "Great Bear." You can see the Big Dipper in the sky over Utah all year long. Using black paper and white chalk, draw the stars that make up the Big Dipper. While you're drawing the Big Dipper, make up your own story about how these stars came to be in the sky! Be sure to include a great bear in your story. Write your story down and then draw your bear around the stars in your drawing. You may want to tell your story to the other students in your class.



This is the bear in the Big Dipper as described in the Native American legend above. You can see the three stars which represent the three hunters. Can you find the hunters' dog?

Written by Brenda Schussman; edited by Brenda Schussman and Daphne Sewing, Utah Project WILD Coordinators; content reviewed by Jordan Pederson, Nongame Program Coordinator; and illustrated by Jill Rensel.



STATE OF UTAH
NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Wildlife Resources

printed on recycled paper